



**WISCONSIN RAPIDS  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES**

John A. Krings, President  
John Benbow, Jr.  
Troy Bier  
Christopher Inda  
Kathi Stebbins-Hintz  
Elizabeth St.Myers  
Julie Timm

June 5, 2024

**SPECIAL BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING  
Board Workshop**

LOCATION: Thomas A. Lenk Educational Services Center, 510 Peach Street, Wisc. Rapids, WI 54494  
Conference Room A/B

TIME: 6:00 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: John Benbow, Troy Bier, Christopher Inda, John Krings, Kathi Stebbins-Hintz,  
Elizabeth St.Myers, Julie Timm

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT: Craig Broeren, Ronald Rasmussen

President John Krings called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Roll Call

Mr. Krings explained the purpose of the meeting is to consider information gathered by individual Board members who recently participated in listening sessions hosted with staff. The purpose of the meetings was to connect with staff to listen and hear about the positive things happening in District schools, as well as learn about any concerns staff may have.

Individual Board members met with interested employees at each building location throughout the month of May as follows:

<b>Building</b>	<b>Board Member</b>	<b># of Employees Attending</b>
Grant Elementary	John Benbow	1
Grove Elementary	Julie Timm	4
Howe Elementary	Julie Timm	10
Mead Elementary	Troy Bier	3
Pitsch Early Learning Center	Julie Timm	8
THINK Academy	Elizabeth St.Myers	6
Washington Elementary	John Krings	6
Woodside Elementary	John Krings	10
Wisc. Rapids Area Middle School	Kathi Stebbins-Hintz	12
Lincoln High School	Elizabeth St.Myers	20
River Cities High School	Christopher Inda	8
Central Oaks/Central Office/Central Storage/Substitutes	Christopher Inda	1

Board members shared and discussed what they learned from their individual visits. Following is not an exhaustive list of everything discussed at each visit, rather it is a collection of some of the main points of discussion raised during the meetings. Certain topics were brought up in multiple buildings, but may only be recorded one time on the list.

Grant

- Piloting of the elementary language materials by a staff member was brought up with positive commentary made about the “Wonders” curriculum
- The individual appreciated having an opportunity to provide feedback during the pilot as the employee claimed other pilots didn’t always allow this
- It was mentioned that the process to become a substitute in the District is cumbersome and difficult, particularly for teachers who just retired; this should be streamlined and improved upon with warmer, more welcoming interactions provided throughout the onboarding process
- Substitutes are required to punch out if a teacher returns early which is frustrating and seems unfair to a sub who committed themselves for the entire timeframe they agreed to work – subs may be missing out on other full-day assignments when this happens
- Elementary teachers required to sub or cover for a colleague lose out on valuable prep time

Grove

- Great co-workers
- Supportive administration
- Since special education teachers became cross categorical, time is being spent disproportionately on behavioral issues over learning disabilities
- Request for ability to attend education conventions for professional development
- There is an interest in understanding how behavioral interventionists and aides are calculated per building

Superintendent Broeren provided some background and history around changes in special education teacher classifications, and made mention of behavioral issues increasing exponentially across all buildings and programs in recent years, not just in special education. These unique and challenging behaviors are taking an increased amount of instructional time and effort away to address to address them. He further explained how school level financial reporting reveals how equitable per pupil spending occurs in each building. Data shows that large disparities in caseloads, class sizes, etc., between buildings do not exist, even if there is some perception by staff that their individual buildings may be receiving fewer resources.

Howe

- Great co-workers
- Team spirit and supportive administration
- New entrance has structural leaks causing water to pour into the office when it rains
- Ant infestations in several classrooms; professional pest control would be greatly appreciated
- Some custodial performance could be improved
- More prep time similar to the secondary schools
- Request for additional professional time to learn new programs
- Request for more staff and better pay for those who support the emotional and learning disabled special education students
- Request for equitable funding throughout the district
- Create a campaign to encourage parent engagement, “Open for Partnership” initiatives
- More opportunities for school board members to visit the schools

Mead

- Things are going well at Mead; good student energy this year, helpful staff, high morale and positive atmosphere
- Staff truly cares about kids, which creates a very welcoming building environment
- Staff enjoy their co-workers and coming into work each day
- Incorporated reading support at Mead to strengthen overall numbers as showcased in recent presentation to the Board
- Concerned about the uncertainty revolving around Act 20; how next year will look is a big looming question mark surrounding this legislation with all of the changes anticipated
- Concerned about a 5<sup>th</sup> grade section being cut; high needs of students and the overall strain being felt is a concern for next year
- Long-term thought: how new staff are being shuffled around; idea that it is hard to retain new staff versus keeping veterans happy
- Staff expressed their love to come to work every day
- Low turnout at this listening session is a plus; everything is going well at Mead and it has been a good year

Pitsch

- Great co-workers
- Very grateful for increased administration presence
- Teri Thomas is essential and needs to stay
- Additional staff (Kevin) was a lifesaver
- Additional classroom aides needed to support the classroom teachers
- Currently, videos are available to cover “snow day” contact hours only on that one day; request to bank the hours of snow day videos anytime and use them for snow days, or get rid of the time limit
- Request for additional professional time to learn new programs
- Request for school board members, administrative, and Central Office staff to visit the building for more frequent check-ins

THINK

- There are a lot of community/community building activities
  - Run Run Rudolph 5K
  - Christmas Concert that is now held at the PAC due to the large attendance
  - Volunteer breakfast
  - End of the year talent show
  - Staff/Student Kickball game
  - Student led monthly all school morning meeting
  - Family math and reading nights
  - Reading and writing celebrations
  - Wax museum
  - Sock hop
  - School Store
  - Holiday shop with profits going to local families
- Doing well building relationships with families (through many of the events listed above)
- The new gym has improved space for events
- They have great volunteers
- Wonderful staff who make all of the great things happen
- “Love the people here,” “It’s a family”
- Increased counseling time this year has been a benefit

- Staff expressed liking the DEU model here where staff can choose their professional development based on their needs and where they want to grow
- More space is needed - teaching space, space for activities
- Seeing an increase in non-English speaking students and need more resources to handle this need
  - There is no support offered in 4K for non-English speaking students
  - More technology support for the non-English speaking students
- Would like to make sure they are receiving current, updated technology
  - Example: they have Dash robots but need more tech to use it fully
  - Example: many iPads are outdated and no longer support the programs classrooms are using
- More instructional aides (special education aides get pulled to other areas if the special education student is absent)
- Class sizes are increasing and that is a concern
- Needs (academic, behavior, non-English speaking) are increasing
- Specialists are spread too thin and often are only in the building a few hours a week; this setup does not allow for collaboration time among teachers
- “Curtain” dividers are an issue:
  - They don’t block sound from the other room
  - There are safety concerns (e.g., students on other side leaning on the curtain and knocking items over in the classroom)
  - In an active shooter scenario what if one side of the curtain evacuates while the other stays? There would be “easy” access through the curtain
- Keeping all staff trained and current on the curriculum. What about new staff who join?
- Importance of keeping “play” in the classroom and providing time for play

Board members inquired about whether there is an increase in non-English speaking students locating to the Rudolph area, to which Mr. Broeren explained there has been a few migrant students attending THINK more recently. With regard to the curtain dividers, Mr. Broeren believes that replacement of the dividers is included in the 10-Year Facility Plan.

#### Washington

- Co-workers are happy and supportive of one another
- Kids are put first, it isn’t just about curriculum and there is flexibility to teach in a way that best meets student need
- Concerns about residual post-COVID impact on students and a lack of social skills – still paying catch-up from this
- Would like to see the Student Engagement Facilitator (SEF) position maintained
- Staff do understand the budget challenges facing the District
- Staff made mention that pay in surrounding districts is higher
- A question was raised around the possibility of having unspent DEU funds utilized by staff for other educational pursuits such as master’s degree coursework
- Staff members have had to cover the music teacher’s duties frequently throughout the year, which hasn’t been ideal
- An idea to have building specific subs was shared, similar to how Stevens Point allows this
- Staff members appreciate the Board changing the personal day benefit by not requiring them to pay for a sub
- They would like to see more visits in the building from Board members
- Staff appreciate the Board’s efforts to listen to employees vent and share their thoughts

Mr. Broeren stated that the current plan is to maintain a .5 FTE SEF at each building in the coming year, similar to how the Educator Effectiveness coaches were in place a few years back. In terms of utilizing DEU funds for other educational opportunities, Mr. Broeren would be concerned with how the District could budget for this possibility as well as provide equitable distribution of this benefit. He mentioned that the Board has taken drastic steps in recent years to help increase earning opportunities for staff members when it increased the DEU amount from \$750 to \$1,050. Lastly, he made mention that he knows Board members enjoy visiting schools and events when they are invited; however, there is a process in place that Board members utilize to visit buildings which must be followed to avoid issues related to meeting notice posting requirements and operations disruptions. Mr. Krings mentioned the possibility of also visiting Parent Teacher groups as a way to check in and express appreciation for all that they do to support District schools.

#### Woodside

- Student demographics at Woodside are changing, which has been difficult and a struggle for staff to work through
- Violence toward staff from students has increased
- Staff appreciate the current DEU model in place
- Staff are thankful for a supportive School Board
- Staff appreciate the strong support from the school’s Parent Teacher Organization
- The paid personal day is much appreciated
- Additional support from a retired teacher to assist with testing has been very helpful
- The addition of Gaggle Therapy and Care Solace has been well received and beneficial
- One staff member mentioned they feel micro-managed by building administration which they contribute the higher rate of turnover by staff
- Staff believe there should be exit interviews occurring with staff as this might help identify certain patterns or areas for improvement
- Not enough subs for aides
- Subs need to go through a better on-boarding process
- Staff would like to see administration visiting classrooms more regularly, not just when critiquing teachers
- Busing concerns were raised due to a lack of understanding about the double runs being made between the secondary and elementary schedules
- Common themes throughout the District would be nice to see
- Having initiatives like the Superintendent “adopting a classroom for a year” (as was done many years ago) would be positive
- The art teacher sets up and tears down at the local library for the annual student art show, and only receives one hour of pay to do so
- Mr. Krings mentioned that on the following day after his visit to Woodside, he received a phone call from a staff member who was in attendance at the meeting. This individual felt compelled to call and defend the building administrator, sharing a different perspective than the one shared at the meeting

#### WR Area Middle

- This school year Tracy has done a remarkable job as she is listening and responding to teachers.
- Staff members feel supported by WRAMS administration.
- There is a positive culture in the Guidance Office; the counselors and school psychologist are very polite and willing to help.

- Becky Mischnick in the SEF role has been a positive addition; she has established a really nice connection between different departments and she keeps things moving and is very organized with excellent follow-up.
- WRAMS has been using the *Seven Mindsets* curriculum; this program is the right choice and Becky's tireless work helped get staff buy-in. Taught during RPT time two days per week, one teacher commented that they are seeing more empathy from special education students since using the program.
- The Behavior Solutions Team has been working hard to decrease negative behaviors, and data shows that negative behaviors are decreasing in the building. The team decides on behavior initiatives which include professional development on how to implement best tier 1 practices, creating a behavior matrix for the entire building, and having each classroom create a behavior matrix that includes student input.
- When things do go wrong with student behaviors, it is much more clear cut with the staff as to what to do. Staff knows how to handle discipline including what steps to take, what is a major and a minor infraction, when to refer to administration, and common language to use. Administration is responding more consistently as well. All behaviors are documented in EduClimber and all staff have access to Educlimber.
- Educlimber has been a huge benefit; it really helps staff keep track of student data.
- Associate Principal Paul Rheinschmidt came in with a lot of experience with Educlimber, which gave WRAMS staff confidence in using it.
- The Behavior Solutions Team and WRAMS staff continue to work on refining what students do when they get sent to in-house and steps to take before students can go back to class. Also, there is growing positivity about wanting to get kids back to class as soon as possible.
- The building is starting training in restorative practices; some staff have been to a train-the-trainer workshop and participated in some virtual professional development on this topic.
- A goal for fall is to help teachers understand student behaviors can change - to continue to move staff to a growth mindset on this topic.
- The forward thinking of the Behavior Solutions Committee and what's coming out of it has been very positive. The Behavior Solutions Committee established a flowchart so staff can see what happens for various behaviors; the flowchart represents universal best practices first, then tier 2 and tier 3 interventions.
- WRAMS is establishing an Academic Solutions Committee (starting next year) to look at grading, equity in grading practices, whether or not the gradebook accurately reflects student knowledge or behavior, and other academic issues. Staff hopes for more outside of the box thinking for this committee, similar to what has come out of the Behavior Solutions Committee. The hope is that the Academic Solutions Committee mirrors what the Behavior Solutions Committee did by creating a flowchart of building practices.
- The "Rewards Program" is positive at WRAMS. Students are eligible to participate in special activities if they have no F's or no more than three major disciplinary infractions. For example, 8th grade goes to Mt. Olympus, 7th grade goes to Weston Lanes and the park, and 6th grade has a choice day at school.
- Staff member Jean Westover is phenomenal.
- Staff feels supported and listened to by the School Board; very positive things were said about the WRPS School Board.
- Staff felt very positive about the amount of professional development offered both at WRAMS and through the District. They are excited about these opportunities, and trauma resiliency training that occurred this year was specifically mentioned.
- The ability of staff to de-escalate behaviors successfully was noted.
- There are amazing support staff at WRAMS; Louis, a security aide in his third year of the position, was praised.
- Parent complaints are being successfully addressed and handled by administration; the Facebook comment about the bathroom at WRAMS that ended with a parent apology was specifically noted.
- New teachers feel supported.
- Appreciation was expressed for compensation increases.
- Worries were expressed about school funding in the future. There is gratitude for compensation increases, improved facilities, etc. However, there is worry about the pressure this will put on future programming.
- Concerns were raised about secretarial/clerical compensation. It was stated that Rapids has the lowest pay and benefits in the Valley for these positions; no recognition of prior experience is given to new hires in these positions. In addition, snow days and 4th of July are unpaid. Secretaries are very important; they work with students and make a difference in schools. Some things that could be done include paying for snow days, the 4th of July, reviewing job descriptions, etc. There is a feeling that they are not supported by the Human Resources Department. When someone vacates a secretarial job to take a custodial position to get higher pay, there is a problem.
- There is a feeling that the middle school does not get the same support as the elementaries and high school. The middle school often feels squeezed out (middle child syndrome). There should be deliberate planning and support for the middle school, including an understanding that middle school students are different from elementary and high school students and have their own specific needs. The WRAMS staff is working hard at helping the District and community understand this, but they don't feel like it is understood. One suggestion to address this issue would be to have a middle school student as a School Board representative in addition to the high school student representative.
- Allowing and encouraging WRAMS staff to attend Association for Middle Level Education (AMLE) conferences should be a priority. This organization promotes a middle level philosophy. Some teachers went to an AMLE conference in November, but more should go. Building and District leadership should attend the National AMLE Leadership Conference along with teacher leaders from the building.
- Concern was expressed about students showing up on "late start" Monday mornings.
- Concern was expressed about teachers not showing up for professional development days and "late start" on Monday morning. For example, teachers call in sick, schedule appointments, etc. on these days. A suggestion was made that if teachers miss these days, they need to somehow make up whatever they missed.
- Need for substitute teachers.
- Two members of the Board should attend each listening session.

Mr. Broeren stated that with regard to the commentary about the District being the lowest paying in the Valley for clerical positions, he doesn't believe this to be true. He shared some history about why there is a large gap in pay between clerical and custodial positions, which has to do with having to compete with the local paper mill to find maintenance/custodians willing to work for the school district. There will be ripple ramifications involved that the Board should consider if employee groups begin to receive varied wage increases.

With regard to two members attending each listening session, Mr. Broeren explained that this could become problematic due to meeting notice requirements should a quorum of Committee members be present.

#### Lincoln

- Lots of hardworking, dedicated staff
- Unique opportunities for all levels of students
- Good school board who are involved
- Students with varied interests are able to find connections at LHS

- Supports available to meet students where they are
- Team approach for students who are struggling
- There is a large, diverse group of students at LHS; students are more accepting of others
- Link Crew has been a benefit with the transition of 8th graders and seeing leadership in the older students
- Many students report LHS as more supportive
- District buildings/ facilities are well maintained and clean
- OPEB is a benefit (especially for older staff)
- Students are out in the community (volunteering, food drives, hygiene drives)
- Our community members are assisting in meeting the needs of students (e.g., Prom dresses, shoes for graduation)
- “Our kids are awesome”
- Staff burnout is a big concern; lots of discussion on this and how the demands are increasing and additional resources (time, money, etc.) are not being provided
- Staff needs fewer initiatives to roll out
  - Admin rolls out many new initiatives which adds to the staff “load,” all while compensation for these additional tasks is lacking. It is not just the compensation either- the number of initiatives and the “extra” that come with these are an issue and it is contributing to staff burnout
  - Constant initiatives being rolled out with no time to “be good” at something before things change again; no constant, things are always changing
- Needs of students are higher, skill sets are lower
- “Not enough minutes in the day” to accomplish all the additional things being asked as well as teaching
- No opportunity to step away from leading programs/initiatives (i.e., no one is stepping up to replace staff members who are running the programs)
- There are more programs offered today with less staff running those programs; staff has decreased over the years while programs have increased
- There is a real exhaustion/burnout; because of this exhaustion staff attendance at extracurricular activities/programs, etc., is reduced
- Staff that retires or leaves is not being replaced
  - Positions are not filled, they are short staffed
- New staff are being offered incentives, but nothing is being done to reward longevity in the District
- “How does WRPS reward loyalty in the District” “Why should I stay”?
- Staff turnover results in constantly feeling like you are training new employees
- “Why did we move away from lane/steps”? Other districts are still using lanes/steps
- DEU’s are an added time commitment in addition to staff workload, and other responsibilities (clubs, initiatives, etc.)
- Would like to see aides compensated at a higher level; look at the possibility of placing them in tiers
- Need admin to trust staff to do their jobs; constant initiatives are not needed
- Effective communication with stakeholders is needed; decisions are coming from the top down with little or no input from staff
  - Example: Getting rid of Microsoft Office without staff discussion or input on the implications of removing that; the decision was made and now staff have to figure out how to proceed with the issues that will come from this
- Staff input should be valued; many times it feels like decisions are already made, even when staff is asked their opinion
- How to attract staff - find creative ways to offer some flexibility in days off
  - Example: Staff covering for each other so a day may be taken during the year
  - Staff may be able to better provide content versus a sub who may have no background in that subject
- “Filling in the gap becomes the new norm”
- When subs are needed, having admin fill in
- When there is a team of teachers, don't pull one teacher to cover another area as there is a reason 2 teachers are needed in that classroom.
- How do we handle coverages for support staff or PAC staff?
- Things keep getting added and there is no additional support or compensation
- Inequality as sports take a priority for admin time and financial resources while other areas don't get the same support
  - Sporting events are heavily attended by admin while other programs and events are not
- The District needs to support the Arts/PAC programs more
- Staff values authentic appreciation
- Board needs to look at how to keep staff - suggestions of simple things that can be changed that would have an impact:
  - Snow day paperwork removed
  - Allowing more than a 7:05 or 7:15 start time (flexibility)
  - Making 1 professional development day a day that can be logged on their own, this would allow them time to work on the numerous initiatives and other demands
  - Staff do appreciate the ½ day off campus for logging grades
  - Be cautious on using public comment to shift the paradigm (Example: Now requiring a graded assignment on the last day of each tri)
  - Allow staff to be a part of the school calendar development
- They need adequate time to transition between trimesters with the Canvas expectations (Example: Don't end a trimester mid-week)
  - Keep in mind staff schedules change each trimester

Mr. Broeren described the communication that has gone out concerning the reduction in Microsoft Offices licenses, sharing reasoning behind it which primarily has to do with cost. He also addressed the perception of there being high turnover in the District and how this correlates to the high numbers of staff members who have come of age to retire, and the trend for this to continue into the future for some time as high numbers of staff members continue to meet eligibility requirements. Mr. Inda raised a question around how the “step and lane” approach worked under the old Collective Bargaining Agreement with the Wisconsin Rapids Education Association (WREA), which Mr. Broeren answered. The current DEU compensation model was implemented years ago in the District to supplement pay opportunities for professional staff.

#### River Cities

Key takeaways from the River Cities Board member visit:

- Enrollment Process: The staff emphasized that students must be credit deficient and receive a recommendation from a counselor to become enrolled in the school.
- Challenges at the Beginning of the Year: The staff noted that the start of the year can be challenging, particularly in helping students overcome bad habits and build new study and life habits.
- School Plan: The school has implemented a robust plan to foster an environment of responsibility and maturity, including:
  - A high attendance policy

- No zeros allowed on work
- Focus on core classes
- Creating a post-graduation plan
- Collaboration with Mid-State for continuing education and a Bell Grant for post-graduation assistance
- Personalized Learning Plans: The staff emphasized that each student's needs are taken into account, allowing for a personalized plan to graduate; this includes opportunities for students to hold employment, work on obtaining a driver's license, and participate in continuing education programs
- Staff Appreciation: The staff expressed gratitude for the continued support from the Board and acknowledged the importance of the Late-Start Mondays, which allows them extra time to prepare for the day
- Facility Upgrades: While there was some mention of facility upgrades, the staff emphasized their appreciation for the continued support from the Board and allowing them to focus on their work

Conclusion:

The River Cities High School staff are dedicated to providing a supportive and personalized learning environment for their students. The school's focus on building responsibility and maturity, as well as its commitment to collaboration with local organizations, has resulted in a strong sense of community and pride among students, staff, and faculty. The Board's continued support is crucial in allowing the school to continue its excellent work.

Recommendations:

1. Continue to provide support for facility upgrades as needed.
2. Consider implementing additional programs or initiatives to further support student success.

Central Oaks/Central Office/Central Storage/Substitutes

One employee attended, expressing concerns about their wage rate for the position held. They felt that they are doing more work than described in their job description, which is above and beyond their scope of responsibilities. They also mentioned that they handle confidential information, which does not align with the District's rate for employees who handle confidential materials. Additionally, they shared information about a similar position that was changed to allow for a higher wage. The employee emphasized their excellent work ethic, stating that they complete all tasks as assigned and do not require babysitting. They requested a wage increase to be in line with the District's "confidential" pay rate.

Following up with Superintendent Broeren, Mr. Inda reviewed wages for similar positions within the District and neighboring districts; the results indicate that this position's wage is in line with similar roles.

Upon reviewing the job description, it was noted that the position does involve processing Free and Reduced Priced applications, which does contain confidential information. However, most employees in the District handle confidential information to some extent. The jobs in the District that receive pay according to handling confidential information typically involve working with a higher level of sensitive information that could result in more severe punishment if mishandled.

The job description also includes a duty to "Perform other duties as assigned," which could cover the additional workload mentioned by the employee.

Mr. Broeren shared the same information with the Board that he provided Mr. Inda which had comparable wage information for the same position at DC Everest, Marshfield and Stevens Point. He explained the circumstances surrounding the "similar position" receiving a higher wage as referenced by the employee, and the differences between the positions. Without going into great detail since individual employee wage information is typically discussed in closed session, Mr. Broeren ended by stating that the District posts positions according to the duties involved and wage amount those applying can expect, and there will be occasions where additional duties get assigned beyond what might be listed on a job description.

Ms. Stebbins-Hintz requested that a comprehensive staff wage comparison study be done which includes Valley Conference schools and/or districts of similar size to help the Board understand where the District sits in this regard. She would also be interested in obtaining wage information for every position in the District since there have been numerous changes in positions throughout the years. She feels this would be beneficial, particularly when serving in her role on the Personnel Services Committee. Mr. Broeren will have the Human Resources Department gather this information, which will take some time.

Board members discussed the information gathered from the listening sessions. The sessions were held about a month later than normal this year due to the Superintendent hiring and other initiatives happening that pushed the meeting dates out later than normal. The Board agreed to continue with April dates in the future since scheduling in the fall leaves little time for staff to consider and gather impressions about how the year is going, particularly for new staff, and it is a very busy time of year. Additionally, having the sessions closer to the end of the year provides time needed to evaluate and implement changes that will impact following years and beyond.

The Board considered whether having an additional student representative outside of the current Lincoln High School representative should be entertained and if it were, Board Policy would need to be updated to reflect this. An idea was shared and discussed about having student groups from various buildings come to showcase their respective school in lieu of adding more student representatives.

Information concerning the commentary around substitutes will be gathered to determine whether roadblocks are providing for a cumbersome process. Additionally, data will be gathered around whether subs are released sooner than the time they were scheduled to work, including the frequency of this occurring. Mr. Broeren stated it would make little sense to have a sub continue to remain at a school if the teacher returns early since their "substitution" duties would conclude. He described

differences between elementary and secondary in terms of how sub coverage works, with elementary subs typically secured for half-day blocks of time. There is more flexibility and ability for colleague coverage to occur at the secondary level.

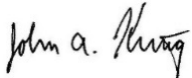
Mr. Krings made mention that following the listening sessions, he was contacted by a staff member who had concerns about a Board member mentioning at the session held in their building this year that “certain things will never change since the Board functions and votes as a ‘5-2’ Board.” This employee had been at previous listening sessions in the past and had never heard this type of commentary which they felt seemed to be political in nature. Mr. Krings expressed that from what he has seen in Board voting records, there have been very few, if any, ‘5-2’ deciding votes. He further mentioned that if a fellow Board member feels this way, he encourages them to bring this concern up at the upcoming Board workshop that is planned so that the Board is able to discuss and address it.

Mr. Broeren commented that he has worked for numerous school boards over the years, and even if a seven-member Board votes ‘4-3’ on an issue, the Board governance model dictates that the majority rules. If Board members comment about being ineffective or unable to have their preferred outcome happen, it undermines the entire process of Board governance which is a Constitutional appointed process by which school districts operate and function. One way to ensure that a viewpoint is shared and understood is to have those who vote “no” on an agenda item provide some rationale as to why during the discussion portion of that item since this cultivates trust and understanding among Board members, as well as informs staff members and constituents.

With a number of newer Board members unfamiliar with the listening session process, the Board discussed what outcomes might be expected to occur, or which ideas might get incorporated as a result of the listening sessions. Mr. Broeren described how certain items are able to be addressed and how changes have occurred based upon ideas generated. The administration performs research on suggestions made to determine the feasibility of implementing any changes being considered. Additionally, the Board has the ability to use the agenda referral and information request section of each regular Board of Education meeting as a way to begin addressing questions or concerns on particular topics. The Superintendent typically provides feedback or additional information on items brought up through the listening sessions via Board update communications or through meeting agendas.

Similar to prior years, Board members plan to take all of the commentary shared into consideration as they make decisions in the coming year.

President Krings adjourned the meeting at 8:10 p.m.



John A. Krings – President

Maurine Hodgson – Secretary

Julie Timm – Clerk